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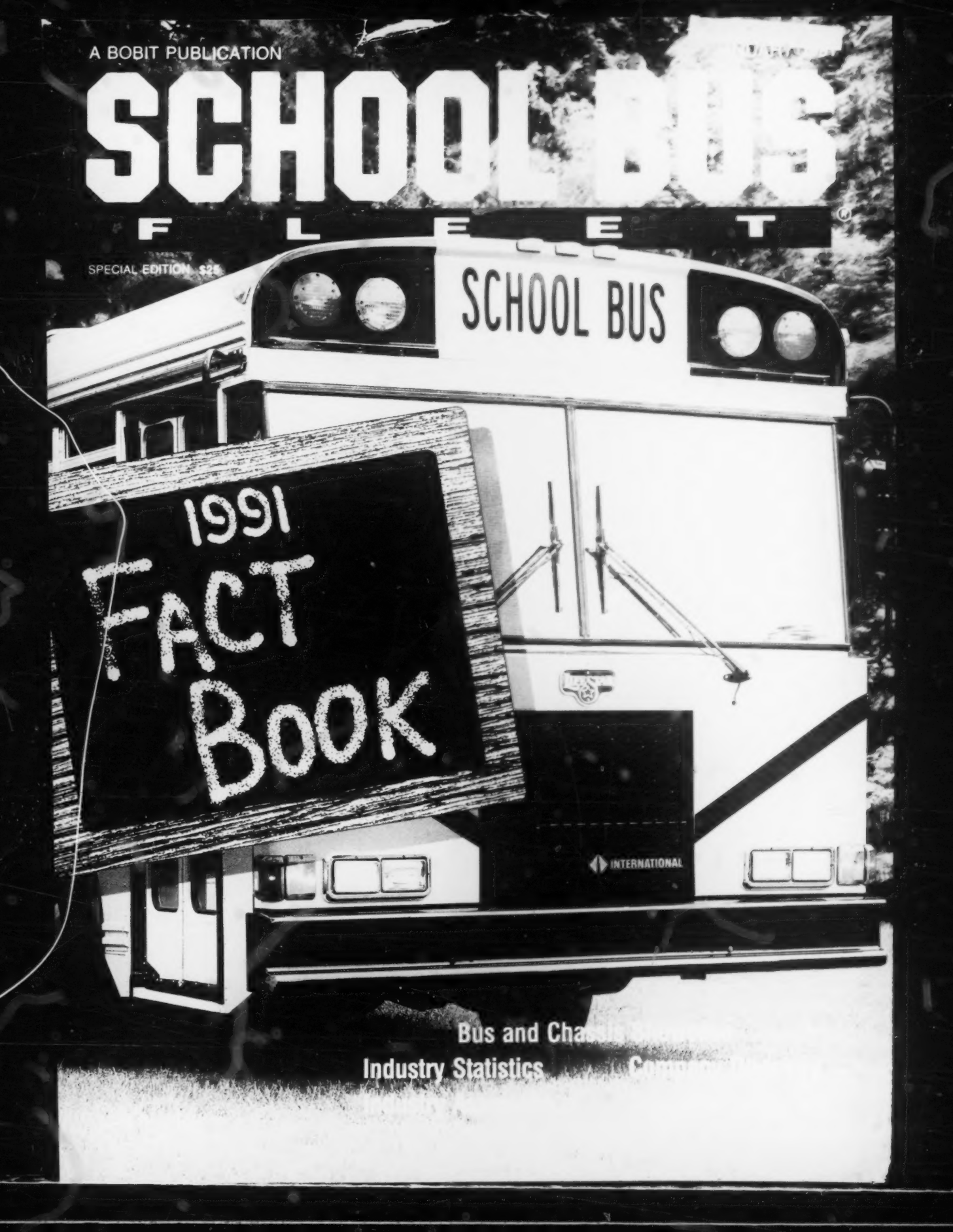

Bus and Cha

Industry Statistics

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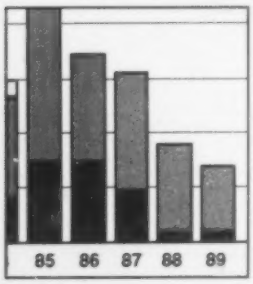
SCHOOL BUS FLEET®

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC & PRIVATE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FLEETS

Vol. 37 No. 1



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Wayne Lifestar mounted on Navistar 3900 FC. Photo courtesy of Navistar International.

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(PUBLISHED ANNUALLY IN JANUARY)

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EDITORIAL AWARD
JESSE H. NEAL CERTIFICATE, 1985

SCHOOL BUS FLEET (ISSN 0036-5601) is published seven times a year, in January (the annual Fact Book), February, April, June, August, October and December by Bobit Publishing Company. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced either in whole or in part without written consent of Bobit Publishing. Please address ALL correspondence to the Editorial and Executive Offices at 2512 Artesia Boulevard, Redondo Beach, California 90278-3296. Please address all subscription correspondence to *SCHOOL BUS FLEET*, P.O. Box 1939, Marion, OH 43305-1939. Subscription price $12 for 1 yr.; $20 for 2yrs.; Canada $18 for 1 yr.; $30 for 2yrs.; Foreign $50 for 1 yr.; $100 for 2 yrs.. (US Currency). Single copy $2 except Fact Book, $25. Second Class postage paid at Redondo Beach, CA 90278-9988 and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SCHOOL BUS FLEET, P.O Box 1939, Marion, OH 43305-1939. Affiliated Publications: *Automotive Fleet, Auto Rental News, Bedroom Business Driver, Contemporary Orthopaedics, Contemporary Surgery, Fleet Financials, Installation News, Limousine & Chauffuer, Metro Magazine, Nails,Nail Tech News, Security Sales, Showcase USA, Sound Challenge.*

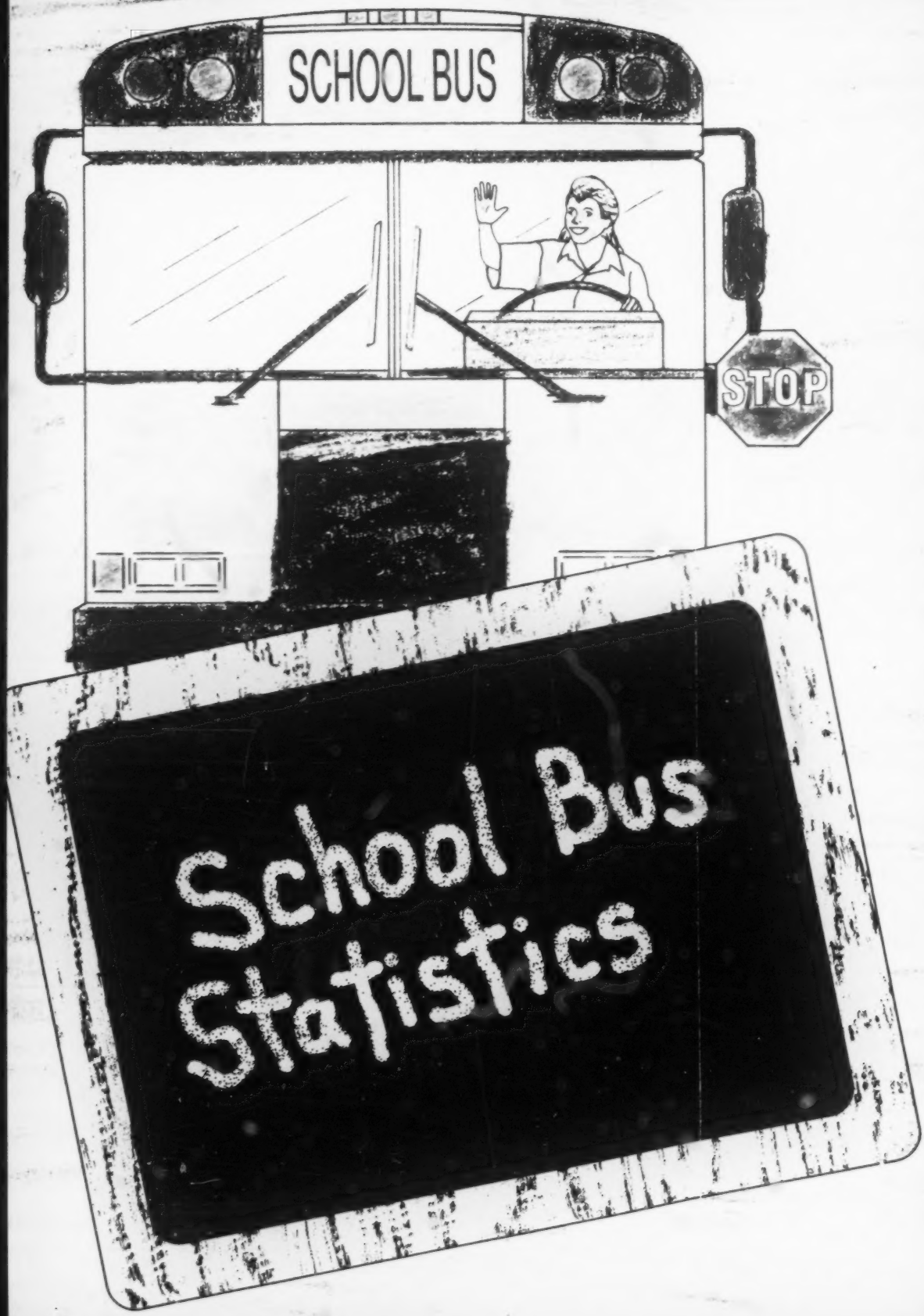
SCHOOL BUS
STOP
School Bus
Statistics

Chart 1 School Transportation, 1988-89 School Year

State	Pupils Transported at Public Expense	Bus Ownership: District-owned Buses Type I	District-owned Buses Type II	District-owned Buses Total	Contractor-owned Buses Type I	Contractor-owned Buses Type II	Contractor-owned Buses Total	Total Number of Buses	Total Miles of Service	Transportation Expenditures ($) Including Capital Outlay
Alabama	440,865	N/A	N/A	6,952	0	0	0	6,952	60,205,999	$96,122,857
Alaska	43,825	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	684	5,805,000*	24,668,172
Arizona	217,435	N/A	N/A	4,500	N/A	N/A	500	5,000	42,161,544	N/A
Arkansas	273,270	3,400	1,020	4,420	0	0	0	4,420	17,544,036	46,970,518
California	1,025,611	11,769	2,530	14,299	4,251	3,469	7,720	22,019	311,487,260	718,427,443
Colorado	240,287	3,792	362	4,154	241	4	245	4,399	52,854,084	75,791,059
Connecticut*	334,080	287	19	306	3,519	1,179	4,698	5,004	N/A	102,307,206*
Delaware	83,102	2	400	402	0	901	901	1,303	16,673,265	26,264,591
Dist. of Columbia	5,161	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	148*	N/A	N/A
Florida	853,000	11,563	231	11,794	938	0	938	12,732	195,786,648	301,146,471
Georgia	880,442	N/A	N/A	63	N/A	N/A	11,067	11,130	98,062,920	182,698,754
Hawaii	39,875	14	0	14	534	261	795	809	7,412,155	20,063,748
Idaho	111,055	1,712	38	1,750	486	6	492	2,242	21,100,495	28,249,424
Illinois	956,407	N/A	N/A	8,749	0	0	0	8,749	180,813,243	353,682,226
Indiana	672,940	7,637	46	7,683	2,708	31	2,739	10,422	74,616,455	221,201,548
Iowa	244,431	6,044	955	6,999	N/A	N/A	289	7,288	61,367,968	50,527,312
Kansas	173,187	N/A	N/A	4,158	N/A	N/A	1,243	5,401	43,421,738	58,858,602
Kentucky	446,998	8,018	589	8,675	0	0	0	8,675	81,157,475	120,673,094
Louisana*	536,735	N/A	N/A	3,358	N/A	N/A	3,882	7,240	N/A	N/A
Maine	171,156	45	2,024	2,069	30	557	587	2,656	32,873,198	47,403,195
Maryland	453,021	2,672	2	2,674	2,694	14	2,708	5,382	89,182,879	119,501,193
Massachusetts	565,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,900	66,125,000	208,018,945
Michigan	806,191	12,351	1,429	13,780	0	0	0	13,780	135,117,610	291,428,570
Minnesota	990,702	3,925	889	4,814	4,878	1,057	5,935	10,749	125,759,805	190,504,886
Mississippi	365,164*	5,217	81	5,298	0	0	0	5,298	42,739,659	64,350,988
Missouri	439,066	9,284	626	9,910	0	0	0	9,910	105,492,795	153,919,628
Montana	59,393	N/A	N/A	716	N/A	N/A	649	1,365	16,925,760	16,955,858
Nebraska	69,814	N/A	N/A	3,981	N/A	N/A	731	4,712	33,056,929	35,907,902
Nevada	59,957	193	840	1,033	0	0	0	1,033	14,720,235	38,640,585
New Hampshire	127,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,000	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	641,825	8,743	5,556	14,299	0	0	0	14,299	N/A	N/A
New Mexico	135,241	591	1	596	1,495	70	1,565	2,157	27,964,800	55,293,300
New York	1,967,185	11,117	4,099	15,216	0	0	12,000	15,216	181,098,494	1,054,935,000
North Carolina	678,301*	13,146	0	13,146	0	0	0	13,146	122,243,134	146,760,446
North Dakota	49,690	N/A	N/A	1,224	N/A	N/A	401	1,625	25,425,818	23,588,890
Ohio	1,289,152	11,600	518	12,118	603	85	688	12,806	165,777,120	330,629,037
Oklahoma	300,000	6,213	494	6,707	0	0	0	6,707	58,000,000	72,259,933
Oregon	218,686	2,665	309	2,874	1,522	133	1,655	4,629	44,456,629	76,348,455
Pennsylvania	1,342,873	N/A	N/A	5,607	N/A	N/A	15,683	21,290	227,500,000	435,122,578
Rhode Island	103,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,475	N/A	N/A
South Carolina	438,469	5,674	0	5,674	25	245	270	5,944	68,694,355	70,644,769
South Dakota	44,470	1,137	97	1,234	425	26	451	1,685	18,352,511	19,341,892
Tennessee	544,904	5,103	138	5,241	1,351	128	1,479	6,720	73,654,920	84,370,096
Texas	1,068,571	23,736	1,714	25,450	1,085	95	1,180	26,630	227,500,000	62,000,000
Utah	150,515	N/A	N/A	1,659	N/A	N/A	84	1,743	21,145,346	33,683,419
Vermont	71,567	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,846	11,531,429	16,657,688
Virginia	750,900	N/A	N/A	9,748	N/A	N/A	219	9,967	88,894,776	168,223,176
Washington	394,700	5,492	471	5,963	737	173	910	6,873	78,127,878	150,297,786
West Virginia	253,356	3,100	69	3,169	0	69	69	3,169	40,581,127	84,175,428
Wisconsin	472,622	7,490	0	7,490	0	0	0	7,490	N/A	191,388,042
Wyoming	37,686	1,123	395	1,518	6	16	22	1,540	14,484,996	23,063,893
Totals:	**22,633,708**	194,855	25,942	271,484	27,528	8,519	82,006	369,334	3,427,897,488	$7,003,068,603

Based on reports from State Departments of Education. Prepared by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil for Transportation Services for SCHOOL BUS FLEET. Special thanks to Kelvin Clayton and Anne Giron of the Utah DOE. *Denotes state failed to reply to survey so previous year's information entered. Final total number of school buses does not equal 100 percent because some intermediate figures in Type I and Type II columns were not tabulated by states and thus are not available. — editor

Chart 2

State School Bus Purchases

State	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Florida	757	734	897	937	1,065	1,166	952	1,451	1,182	1,222
Kentucky	670	566	632	604	632	579	650	629	676	566
North Carolina	610	953	585	759	785	1,202	1,200	1,290	1,200	520
South Carolina	506	285	219	368	718	409	1,000	0	0	275
Texas	*2,000	*2,000	*2,000	*2,000	*2,000	*2,000	1,950	1,850	1,900	1,800
West Virginia	263	272	324	349	347	328	342	555	289	*268
Total	**4,806**	**4,810**	**4,657**	**5,017**	**5,547**	**5,684**	**6,094**	**5,775**	**5,247**	**4,651**

*approximations

In six states school buses are purchased directly by the state, with a committee comprised of the state director of pupil transportation services and other educational or transportation experts developing the specifications. State officials compile the number of buses that districts (and sometimes contractors) require, and then solicit bids from bus body and chassis manufacturers. That method of procuring school buses is unlike that in other states which, through their reimbursement formula, reimburse school districts which handle the procurements. Of the six states listed, five purchase once a year while the sixth (Texas) purchases monthly. The data for four of the states is presently by school year while Kentucky purchases by calendar year.

SOURCE: **SCHOOL BUS FLEET** Magazine

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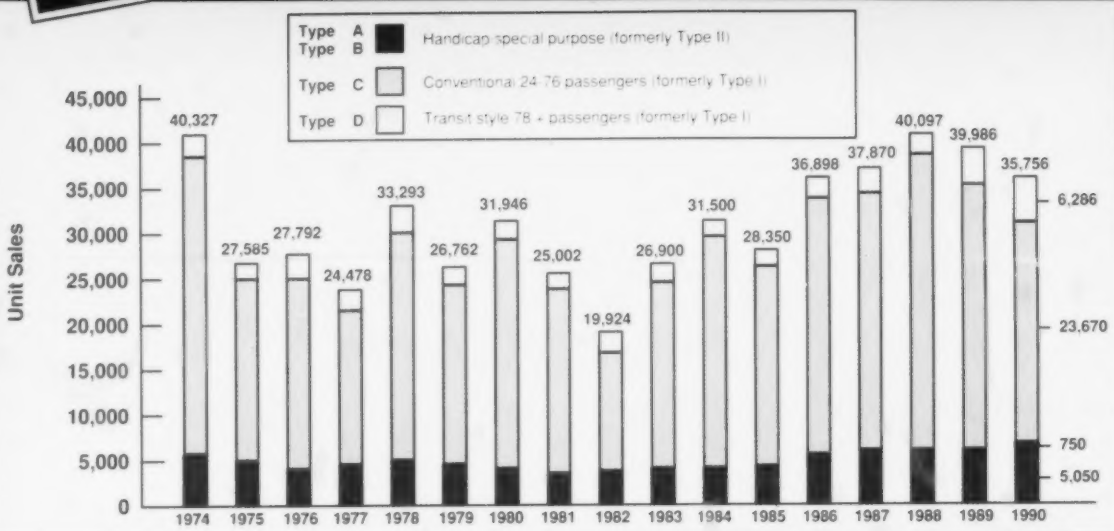
Chart 3

U.S. School Bus Body Sales 1974-1990



1990 saw a dramatic shift in school bus sales. Overall, the market was down approximately 10 percent. Conventional bus production, the largest segment, fell slightly more than 11 percent last year; this is the largest drop in this category since the early 1980's. Meanwhile, transit-style production jumped a record 39 percent, reflecting the shift toward forward control buses. Figures for the year were collected from bus manufacturers and component suppliers three weeks before the end of the calendar year and thus include estimates to year-end. Canadian school bus production is not included but would add approximately 2,000 vehicles.

SOURCE: **SCHOOL BUS FLEET** Magazine

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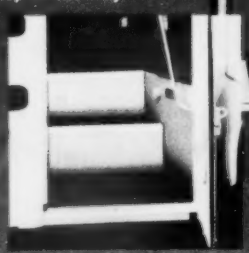

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1833 E. Market Street,
Akron, Ohio 44305
(216) 784-1291

Circle 107 on SBF Action Card

School Bus Fatalities and Special Ed. Transportation

Chart 4

Special Education Costs, Private School Fleets

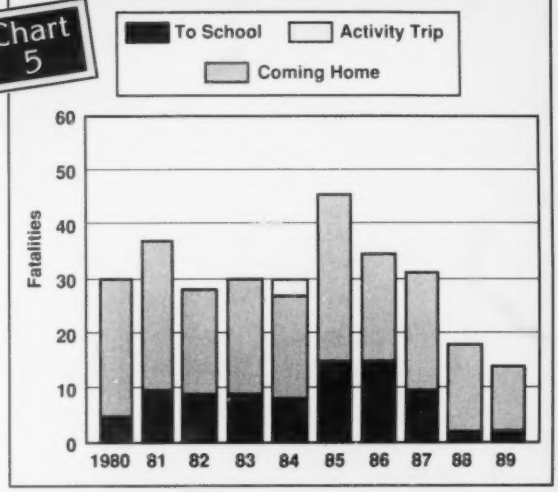
Two new areas reported in this year's survey involve costs for special education transportation for the 1988-1989 school year, whether states maintain these cost within their regular pupil transportation budget or separately. A second new question deals with private school bus fleets, whether or not agencies responsible for school transportation also maintain records of private school fleets.

	Special Ed Transportation		Private School Fleets	
State	Is Budget Separate from Other Ed. Budgets?	Total Annual ($) Costs for Service	Does State Keep Records of Private School, School Buses?	No.of Private School Buses
Alabama	no	$1,521,231	no	Unknown
Alaska	no		no	Unknown
Arizona	N/A		no	Unknown
Arkansas	yes		no	Unknown
California	no		yes	1,011
Colorado	no		no	Unknown
Connecticut	N/A			Unknown
Delaware*	yes	28,020,228	yes	204
Dist. of Columbia	N/A			Unknown
Florida	no		yes	5,500
Georgia	no		no	Unknown
Hawaii	no	7,895,000	no	Unknown
Idaho	no		no	Unknown
Illinois	N/A	123,939,132		Unknown
Indiana	no		no	Unknown
Iowa	yes		yes	289
Kansas	yes	19,110,956	no	Unknown
Kentucky	N/A		no	Unknown
Louisana	N/A			Unknown
Maine	no		no	Unknown
Maryland	N/A		yes	52
Massachusetts	no	67,797,467	no	Unknown
Michigan	no	72,857,143	no	Unknown
Minnesota	no	35,015,012	yes	1,360
Mississippi	no	1,850,000	no	Unknown
Missouri	no	13,210,881	no	Unknown
Montana	N/A		no	Unknown
Nebraska	yes	6,010,961	yes	169
Nevada	no	142,982	yes	52
New Hampshire	N/A		no	Unknown
New Jersey	N/A		no	Unknown
New Mexico	no		no	Unknown
New York	no		no	Unknown
North Carolina	yes	4,096,319	no	Unknown
North Dakota	no		no	Unknown
Ohio	yes	22,000,000	no	Unknown
Oklahoma	no		no	Unknown
Oregon	no		yes (limited)	300
Pennsylvania	no	50,233,940		Unknown
Rhode Island	N/A		no	Unknown
South Carolina	no		no	Unknown
South Dakota	N/A		no	Unknown
Tennessee	yes		no	Unknown
Texas	no	86,880,000	no	Unknown
Vermont	N/A			
Utah	no	7,636,004	yes	54
Virginia	N/A		no	Unknown
Washington	no	25,146,144	no	Unknown
West Virginia	no		no	Unknown
Wisconsin	no		no	Unknown
Wyoming	no		no	Unknown
Total		$573,363,400		9,891*

Based on reports from State Departments of Education. Prepared by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. Special thanks to Kelvin Clayton and Anne Giron of the Utah Department of Education. *Denotes not counted in "Total Bus" column on preceding page. — editor.

Chart 5

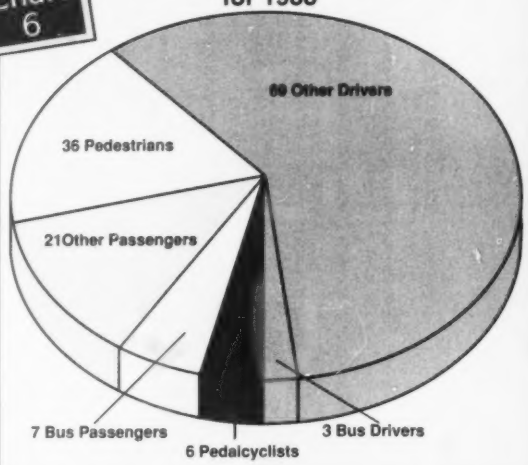
School Bus Fatalities for 1989-90



The annual K-DOT Loading & Unloading survey listed 17 children killed in loading and unloading zones for 49 states and the District of Columbia for the 1989-90 school year (Louisiana has no reporting system). Ten were boys, seven girls. Weather was clear in 14 deaths, rainy in three. Eleven deaths were in urban areas, six in rural. All 17 deaths were during daylight. Thirty-four states reported no fatalities. May had the most deaths with four. Tuesday had the most deaths with five. Pennsylvania, with two, was the only state with more than one fatality. Since 1970, when these statistics became available, 862 children have been killed. SOURCE: Kansas DOT.

Chart 6

Distribution of Fatalities in Fatal Accidents Involving School Buses for 1988



In 1988 (calendar year) there were 142 fatalities nationwide involving vehicles used for school activities. Most of them were drivers of other vehicles. Of the pedestrians, half were aged 5 to 9, 13.9 percent were 10 to 14 and 19.4 percent were 18 and older. Frontal collisions caused 86.5 percent of the bus fatalities in multi-vehicle accidents and 37.5 percent in single-vehicle accidents. Rollovers caused 43.8 percent of the fatalities. SOURCE: NHTSA's Fatal Accident Reporting System.

School Bus Accidents By State 1988-1989

Chart 7

State	Total Vehicles	Annual Bus Mileage (000)	Pupils Transp. Daily	Type of School Bus Accident				Prop. Damage Only Acc.	Persons Injured	
				(a) Total	Other Veh.	Non-Coll.	Fixed Obj.		Total	Pupils
Alabama	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Alaska	684	5,805	43,825	109	100	1	7	98	11	2
Arizona	4,700	38,794	224,721	233	211	4	9	175	164	53
Arkansas	4,107	33,098	273,270	256	253	2	0	230	25	25
California	20,066	272,632	970,000	2,502	1,556	186	252	1,974	1,024	669
Colorado	5,477	43,860	226,526	208	171	2	24	162	72	42
Connecticut	5,004	...	349,000	515	388	0	125	465	132	71
Delaware	1,283	16,673	82,862	117	111	1	3	95	73	54
Dist. of Col.	187	1,646	12,000	67	66	0	0	66	4	0
Florida	10,322	195,787	783,477	1,007	834	18	139	...	450	370
Georgia	8,878	95,175	867,979	710	493	0	108	...	221	165
Hawaii	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Idaho	2,250	...	111,000	136	114	5	13	114	54	8
Illinois	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Indiana	10,422	63,958	672,940	942	...	...	...	821	358	207
Iowa	6,999	61,230	280,777	448	296	16	115	397	87	38
Kansas	5,954	62,906	174,811	195	172	6	7	133	112	37
Kentucky	7,240	81,157	446,988	844	734	33	66	754	270	237
Louisiana	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maine	2,625	32,873	171,156	163	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maryland	5,382	90,421	453,021	1,163	1,020	10	123	1,017	285	156
Massachusetts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Michigan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Minnesota	11,594	124,547	659,751	626	786	6	16	655	281	102
Mississippi	5,298	42,740	389,553	391	347	25	19	371	22	20
Missouri	11,024	114,087	450,625	1,197	930	147	76	966	555	416
Montana	1,373	17,143	59,527	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nebraska	3,981	34,093	69,814	96	85	0	4	78	51	51
Nevada	1,045	14,720	59,957	291	189	3	75	253	46	37
New Hampshire	2,000	...	125,000	267	...	...	...	141	25	24
New Jersey	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Mexico	2,133	30,358	134,145	211	182	2	19	112	81	75
New York	35,000	181,000	2,000,000	556	459	0	25	...	666	487
North Carolina	13,146	122,243	685,386	855	729	53	2	556	178	50
North Dakota	1,908	25,426	49,690	6	5	0	1	...	...	...
Ohio	12,806	166,402	1,289,883	952	817	31	84	713	...	...
Oklahoma	6,706	58,750	297,377	279	253	0	9	238	67	41
Oregon	4,589	43,215	214,105	394	231	6	151	386	11	9
Pennsylvania	21,243	267,219	1,342,003	1,250	1,024	43	151	1,002	414	303
Rhode Island	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Carolina	5,674	66,727	436,676	418	355	9	44	399	473	358
South Dakota	1,685	18,353	44,469	56	37	3	10	55	34	33
Tennessee	6,715	65,393	544,904	735	387	8	183	622	216	142
Texas	29,069	254,771	1,035,943	1,643	1,439	7	49	1,073	1,164	419
Utah	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vermont	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Virginia	9,965	88,855	750,902	960	870	1	68	808	344	219
Washington	6,627	74,084	375,519	371	348	2	14	249	216	66
West Virginia	2,953	40,736	262,878	674	...	...	...	657	42	28
Wisconsin	7,490	80,551	472,622	997	923	7	34	680	315	248
Wyoming	1,540	14,636	37,686	43	34	2	4	30	38	22
TOTAL[b]	**380,000**	**4,000,000**	**22,000,000**	**29,000**	**23,000**	**900**	**2,700**	**27,000**	**11,800**	**7,300**

Source: National Safety Council (NSC) survey of state departments of education and state traffic authorities. Most reports cover 1988-1989 school year or 1989 calendar year. U.S. totals are NSC estimates for the calendar year 1989. [a]Totals include additional accident types not shown separately. [b]Procedures for estimating U.S. totals were revised for the 1985 edition. U.S. totals in this edition are not comparable to estimates prior to the 1985 edition.

... indicates not available

Percentage of School Buses By State Manufactured Prior to 1977

Chart 8

According to the SCHOOL BUS FLEET State Directors of Transportation Survey conducted in January 1990, 12 percent of the nation's school bus fleet of 372,133 buses were manufactured before the 1977 Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) was adopted. In 1989, 17 percent of 360,000 school buses nationally were pre-77 buses.

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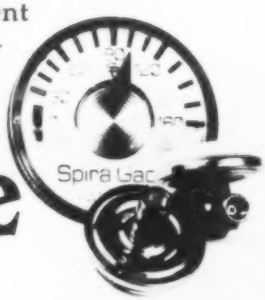

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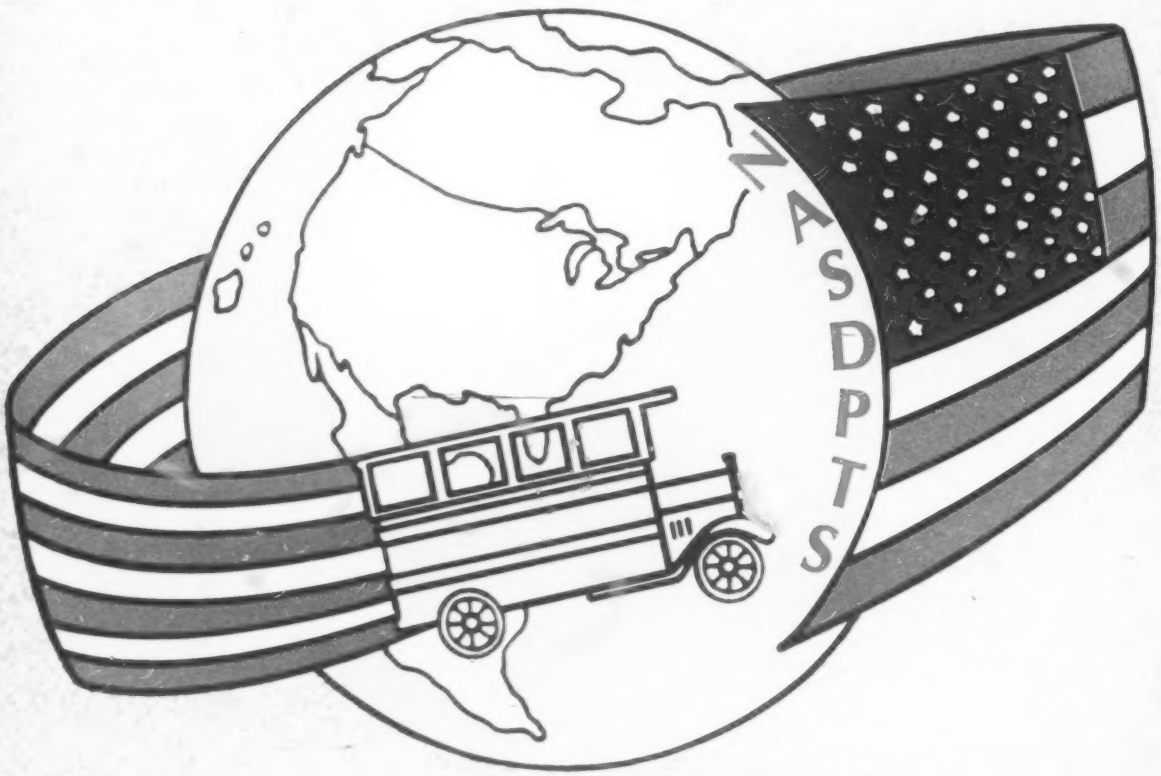
SPECIAL STATE DIRECTORS ISSUE



Who Are the State Directors?

Fewer Pre-DOT Buses on the Road

How to Lobby Uncle Sam

School Busing Hit by Funding Cuts

Rural Contractor Finds American Dream

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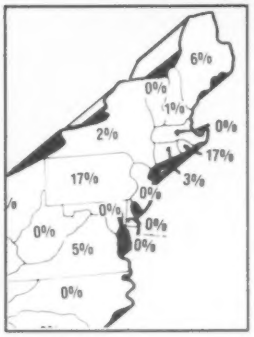
SCHOOL BUS FLEET

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC & PRIVATE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FLEETS

Vol. 37 No. 2

FEBRUARY / MARCH 1991



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EDITORIAL AWARD
JESSE H. NEAL CERTIFICATE, 1985

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Most fatalities caused by bus, K-DOT reports

Seventeen children were reported killed in the loading and unloading zone during the 1989-90 school year. That is according to the most recent Kansas Department of Transportation *National School Bus Loading and Unloading Survey.*

The survey found that nine children were killed at the front of the bus, five at the back of the bus and three by vehicles passing the school bus. In 1988, K-DOT reported that 16 children were killed in the loading and unloading zones.

The survey, conducted annually since the early 1970s, shows that most of the U.S. schoolchildren killed by vehicles in and around the loading and unloading zone over the last 20 years were killed by their own school bus.

Of the 862 children killed since 1970 when the school bus was present, 507, or 58.8 percent, were killed by their bus, according to K-DOT. Other vehicles were responsible for 328, or 38.1 percent, of the deaths. Information was not available for the remaining 27 fatalities.

"A six-year-old girl was dropped off at her designated bus stop. She walked in front of her bus and was hit. The driver proceeded to make another stop, not knowing that he had run over the girl." That was typical of the accidents, the survey said.

Also typical: "A 14-year-old girl was running after her bus, which was leaving from the elementary school to go to the middle school. The student grabbed the side door hand rail and slipped and fell under the rear right wheel."

Of the 862 fatalities, 587, or 68 percent, occurred on the way home, and 246, or 28.5 percent, were on the way to school. The remaining 29 fatalities were either on an activity trip or had no information provided.

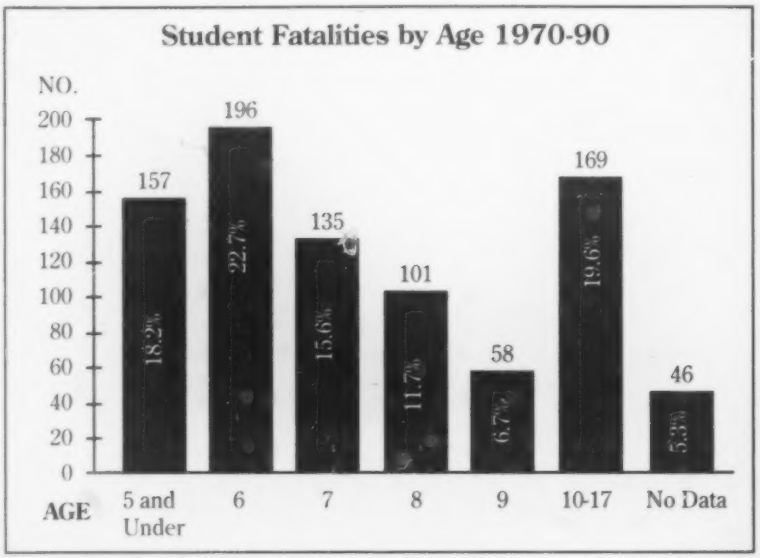

Chart shows the ages of the 862 schoolchildren killed in and around loading and unloading zones when their bus was near. SOURCE: K-DOT.

Supreme Court rules on desegregation

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that it is time for judges to stop administering long-standing court-ordered desegregation programs.

In mid-January the court said that it is time for judges to return full control of schools to local officials, even if it results in "primarily one-race schools."

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, writing for the 5-3 majority, said court-ordered school desegregation was intended only as a temporary measure. The case involved schools in Oklahoma City. The ruling, however, did not set precise standards for deciding when a school board has fully complied with a desegregation order.

The impact of this ruling to pupil transportation remains to be seen. About 800 school districts, most in the Midwest and South, are still under federal court desegregation decrees. Desegregation is carried out in a number ways, including busing and magnet schools to attract white students to minority neighborhoods.

Charles F. Hood, administrator of school transportation for the state of Florida, said not much will change right away in his state. Florida has a number of desegregation programs, and all its buses are purchased through state bid.

Karen Finkel, executive director of NSTA, does not see "a dramatic decrease in the number of vehicles." She said, however, the court ruling may lead to some decreases in the number of miles children are driven to school. "School busing for racial desegregation is just one of many reasons for the increased demand for school buses in recent years," Finkel said.

"The schools have also taken on additional services, including before- and after-school programs. Many of them have gone to a longer day and added extracurricular activities. And they have responded to a growing number of single parents. All these changes, desegregation included, have generally been put in place in order to meet the needs of schoolchildren and their parents. Once a new service is established, most districts have found it difficult to make a change that reduces service levels."

Cynthia Diamond, director of marketing for school bus manufacturer Carpenter Mfg. in Mitchell, Ind., said the court ruling "will have no affect on the school bus industry" or bus sales. "Our main concern now is the recession," she said, and that a number of states have slashed funds for bus purchases.

Paul Glaske, president and CEO of Blue Bird Body Co., said, "I don't personally think the ruling will have a lot of impact" on bus sales. Blue

Pupil Transportation Feels Effects of War with Iraq

Annual State Directors Survey finds funding shortfalls are widespread. The costs of war wreak havoc with already strained budgets. Higher fuel prices take their toll.

By Jody L. Bush

School transportation budgets are reeling from the consequences of war and inadequate funds are further straining pupil transportation service. In the annual *SCHOOL BUS FLEET* State Director's Survey, state directors said they need more money to keep the school bus wheels rolling.

Of the 43 states that responded to the survey, 21 reported that rising fuel costs and funding shortfalls were threatening pupil transportation service.

Before Jan. 15 when the first bombs fell on Baghdad, increases in fuel prices had already taken a toll on pupil transportation budgets.

"Because gasoline costs constitute 13 to 27 percent of a school district's total pupil transportation cost, school districts are experiencing significantly higher student transportation costs," said Kathleen Cole, state director of pupil transportation in Wisconsin.

Twenty-three states reported more than $68 million in increased fuel costs for student transportation. Florida reported that the war in the Persian Gulf has cost $11.5 million in pupil transportation service. That was the largest increase reported in this year's survey.

Some states reported average per-gallon increases or percentage of increases in total fuel costs. Because the total number of gallons used or total cost of fuel was not reported, estimating the cost for those states was not possible.

State directors said they would ask state legislatures for more money to compensate for decimated fuel budgets during January legislative sessions. However, state directors were pessimistic about getting more funds as state politicians searched for ways to reduce state deficits.

"We, like a number of other states, are in a shortfall situation that is playing havoc with all state services ... any legislation with fiscal implications will be heavily impacted by the current economic situation," said Richard Alexander, state director of pupil transportation in Maryland.

In California, new Gov. Pete Wilson announced major statewide funding cuts in education. "School districts that were anticipating revenues from the state are not going to get them," said Ron Kinney, state director of pupil transportation in California.

"Some schools in California are on the verge of bankruptcy," he said. "If school districts can't even afford schools, it's not unlikely that there are going to be cuts in transportation funding."

George Davis, state director in New York, predicted funds for school bus driver training program might be eliminated due to a burgeoning state deficit. Currently, New York has a deficit of $1.5 billion. Davis said, "It is expected that the deficit for the next fiscal year may approach $4 billion. The shortfall is expected to be made up from program and personnel cuts."

In Oklahoma, a newly-appointed state superintendent of public schools attempted to "trim the fat off DOE" by eliminating the student transportation department, according to Frank Harris, assistant director of school transportation at the state Department of Education (DOE).

In mid-January, the superintendent announced that student transportation responsibilities would be shifted to the accreditation division of DOE. "They won't do nearly the activities that we do," Harris said.

Harris and five staff members conduct driver training workshops and annual bus inspections for all school districts in the state. He said school districts would be forced to provide those services and would likely not do an adequate job. "The new state superintendent has to go before the state Board of Education to get this approved," he said.

Several state directors said that outdated or inadequate funding formulas are further hampering pupil transportation service. Twenty-one states said that funding formulas need to be changed for the changing environment of pupil transportation.

Funding for pupil transportation service in Maryland is provided through two grants based on 1981 pupil transportation formulas that are annually increased according to the Consumer Price Index, with an additional $500 for each handicapped student.

"These two grants do not recognize other changes, such as increased ridership and enrollment. At this point, several school systems must supplement the state grants with large amounts of local funds," Alexander of

Maryland said.

Meanwhile, the level of state funding in Tennessee has declined from 97 percent in the '50s to 26 percent in the '90s. "The state board has proposed increasing this percentage to 75 percent, which is still below the 1960 funding period," said Dr. Ernest Farmer, state director.

In Texas, the funding for state education was declared unconstitutional in the late '80s because of unequal funding distribution among school districts. "There is a low tax base in some districts and a large tax base in others," said Jack "B.J." Edwards, state director. Several special legislative sessions were held to deal with the funding problem. "Taxes have been raised and funds redistributed, but the problem still exists," Edwards said. State legislators, he said, would address that issue once again in the 1991 legislative session.

State directors said that funds to buy buses were also a problem or didn't exist. "No funds were appropriated to purchase new buses in 1990 and it is very doubtful that any funds will be appropriated for 1991 ... Due to the lack of bus replacement, the cost of maintaining older buses increases each year," Ralph Hendrix, state director in South Carolina, said.

Norma Paulus, state superintendent of public instruction in Oregon, said that lack of funds for bus purchasing was having a negative effect on reducing the number of pre-'77 buses in the state.

"Reduced funding discourages the replacement of older (pre-'77) buses, and continued growth of student numbers increases the demand for available units," Paulus said.

According to this year's survey, 10.6 percent, 35,000 vehicles, of the nation's 369,000 school buses are pre-standard buses.

Since the editors of the magazine began tracking the phase-out of pre-'77 school buses, there has been an annual decline of pre-'77 buses of between 2 to 5 percent nationwide. In 1988, 17 percent of school buses nationwide were pre-'77 and in 1989, 12 percent were pre-'77 buses.

This year most states reported an average drop in pre-'77 buses of about 2 percent with one exception. The number of pre-'77 buses in Nevada dropped from 24 percent last year to 5 percent in 1991.

Four states reported they had no pre-'77 school buses used fro pupil transportation. Last year only one state had phased out its pre-'77 buses.

Meanwhile, California reported the largest percentage, 38 percent, of pre-'77 school buses still in service. That represents 8,367 of 22,019 school buses.

Special education

A question on the survey asked state directors if providing special education transportation was depleting funds for regular transportation service. Twenty-nine state directors said it was. Ten states disagreed and three strongly disagreed.

Several state directors disagreed because special education transportation funding is separate from regular transportation budgets. A few state directors disagreed with how the question was asked. They said it ap-

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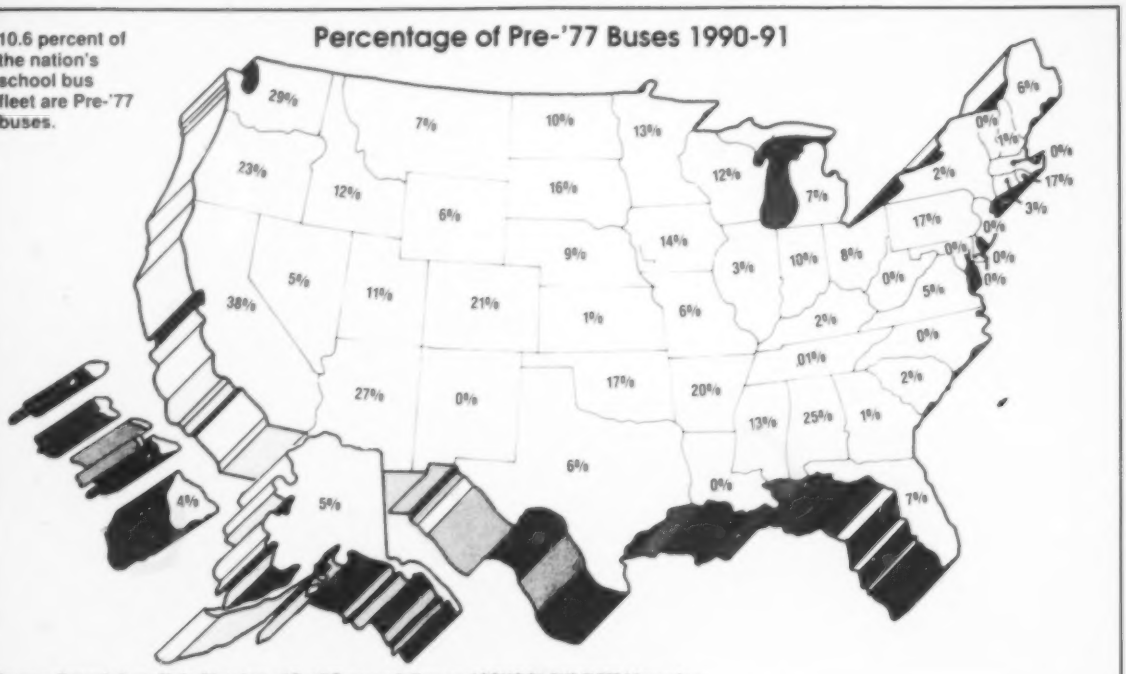
10.6 percent of the nation's school bus fleet are Pre-'77 buses.



Source: Reports from State Directors of Pupil Transportation and SCHOOL BUS FLEET Magazine.

peared to place a value on those student transportation services.

Providing special education transportation has become a complicated and costly issue for school transportation officials throughout the country. "The cost and maintenance of specialized equipment to meet the expanding needs of handicapped children will continue to impact the programs in most, if not all, school systems," said Tennessee's Farmer.

School bus safety issues

Several state directors said that developing safety programs for school bus drivers and passengers was an important issue in their state.

"Every fatality in Connecticut has been the result of human error, either on the part of the driver or on the part of the victim. Improved driver training is one way to address the loading zone danger," said John O'Connell, state director in Connecticut.

In the past two years, 41 states received $3.7 million in 402 funds for developing school bus safety programs. Forty state directors said they applied for or planned to apply for those funds for 1990-91.

State directors were asked whether local educational agencies (LEAs) were required to adopt a disaster preparedness plans for schools. Twenty-two states reported that LEAs were required to adopt those plans.

Surprisingly, 26 states reported that they don't have safety guidelines or regulations for transporting children with communicable diseases. However, a few state directors said local school districts are responsible for developing those guidelines.

State directors were asked if their state has adopted safety standards drafted at the 11th National Standards Conference last May. Recommendations have been adopted by 11 states, according to the survey. Thirty-two state directors reported that although their states haven't adopted those standards, they plan to.

Fifteen state directors reported none of the standards would be adopted in their states. Three states: Montana, Idaho and South Dakota are required to adopt the document in its entirety.

Homeless children

A question on this year's survey dealt with the growing number of homeless children throughout the country. State directors were asked if that was an issue in their state.

Fourteen states provide transportation to homeless children. Of those states, only two, North Dakota and Washington, reported the number of students transported. The total between those states was 17,330.

Maryland provides transportation for homeless children. In the past it hasn't been a problem, but state director Alexander said it might become one. Currently, the state legislature is considering requiring school districts to transport homeless children to their previous neighborhood schools rather than to the school nearest their temporary residence. Providing that service would be costly, Alexander said, "perhaps about the same as the cost for a handicapped child."

School districts are also providing transportation service for pre-schoolers. State directors said transportation statutes need to be changed to allow that age group on the school bus.

Currently, only kindergarten through 12th grade students are allowed to be transported on school buses. "We need to redefine school children to allow for transportation of pre-school children," said Robert Russell, state director in Indiana.

State directors also said school bus safety programs need to be developed for that age group, specifically programs that teach them about the danger zones around the school bus.

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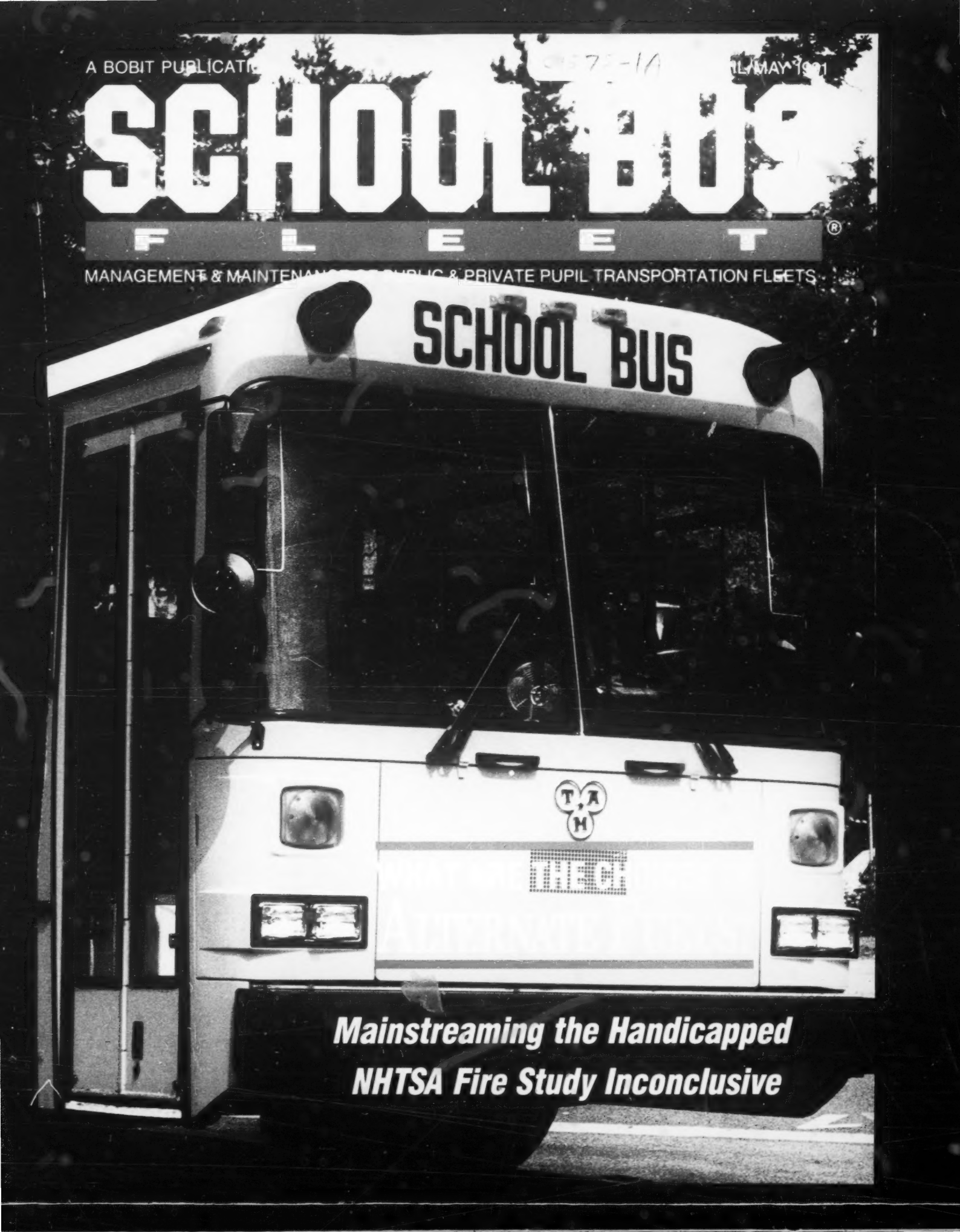

Mainstreaming the Handicapped

NHTSA Fire Study Inconclusive

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SCHOOL BUS FLEET®

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC & PRIVATE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FLEETS

Vol. 37 No. 3

APRIL / MAY 1991

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EDITORIAL AWARD
JESSE H. NEAL CERTIFICATE, 1985

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MAINSTREAMING the Handicapped Presents New Challenges for Transportation Providers

More handicapped children are riding regular school buses. Operators need more information and drivers need more training.

Handicapped transportation has always been a challenge for transportation providers and that isn't about to change. Mainstreaming and transporting severely handicapped children are what is currently keeping transportation providers on their toes.

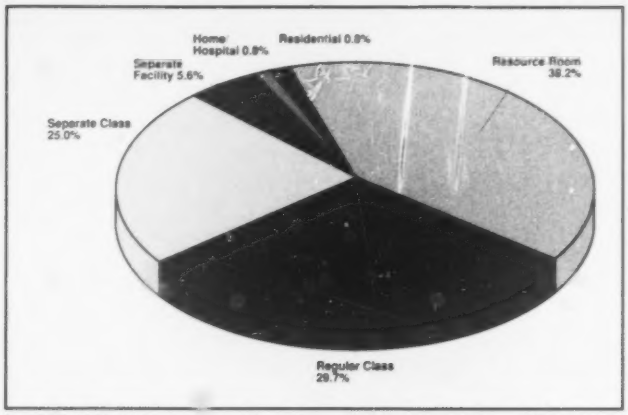
Under the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), handicapped children are entitled to receive "free and appropriate" education in the "least restrictive environment (LRE)" — under the federal definition that means regular education schools.

"It's always been in the law, but in the past three years there has been a big push for LRE's," said Lynwood Beekman, an attorney in Okemos, Mich., who represents 55 school districts in legal cases involving handicapped children.

In the past five years, the federal government has amended EHA to provide more services for the handicapped population. There are more educational options available and more financial incentives for states to develop those programs.

About 4.5 million handicapped children nationwide receive those services. The federal government allocated $2.3 billion to states in 1991 for handicapped programs.

In addition to educational services, medical, psychological and servic-



In 1987-1988, 92.9 percent of handicapped students nationwide between the ages of 3 and 21 received services in regular school buildings — regular classes, resource rooms or separate classes. Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

es that address the childs' individual handicap are required by law.

Typically, regular schools can't meet all those criteria. As a result, transportation providers are shuttling students to several schools each day for individual handicapped programs.

"Two and from school transportation has grown from 20 school sites to 80 in the past four years," said Linda Carey, director of transportation at Boces 1 Monroe, Fairport, N.Y. Boces transports 961 special education and 700 regular education students to and from school each day.

Its 110 bus fleet averages 15,000 miles each day. Mileage has increased by 1.5 million in the past four years and transportation costs have increased 14 percent during that time.

Los Angeles Unified School District transports 11,000 handicapped children each day on 828 special-ed routes. "We're transporting handicapped students to every school in the district," said Bud Dunevant, transportation director.

Driver training

As a result of the mainstreaming effort, more handicapped children are riding regular school buses and that has transportation providers concerned about driver training.

There are autistic, severely emotionally disturbed, and children with oxygen tanks riding regular school buses.

"It's not fair to the bus driver to put these kids on the bus without giving him any training. Most importantly, it's not fair to the kids," Beekman in Michigan said.

Historically, handicapped transportation providers have had to develop their own methods and safety practices for transporting the handicapped. And that hasn't changed. There aren't any federal regulations or guidelines for transporting the handicapped.

Public Law 94-142 mandates special education transportation. The law specifically determines eligibility and the service provided to transport handicapped children to and from school but it doesn't state how to do that. That is determined at the local level through Individual Educational Plans (IEPs).

Traditionally, IEP's have not specified the type and method of transportation the handicapped child should receive, but that has changed. Parents, physicians and school officials are requesting nurses, bus attendants and equipment that meets the childs' individual needs.

The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) conducted a

Federal Grants Allocated to States for Special Education Services

STATE	CHAPTER 1 OF ESEA (SOP)	EHA-B	PRESCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM	PART-H
ALABAMA	280,879	34,178,741	9,744,744	1,030,041
ALASKA	1,834,423	4,076,651	572,500	341,396
ARIZONA	702,248	17,889,468	2,426,319	1,082,713
ARKANSAS	1,465,584	14,735,405	3,524,117	602,808
CALIFORNIA	1,612,111	142,603,125	24,006,931	8,568,064
COLORADO	2,660,547	16,116,954	1,924,659	930,548
CONNECTICUT	2,960,701	20,084,947	2,367,000	795,940
DELAWARE	2,251,280	3,458,371	94,655	341,396
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	2,701,918	991,248	351,900	341,396
FLORIDA	4,014,664	66,659,626	4,038,748	3,031,596
GEORGIA	1,381,983	30,325,737	6,457,403	1,767,456
HAWAII	230,558	3,933,330	561,341	341,396
IDAHO	84,561	6,423,117	5,711,738	341,396
ILLINOIS	22,389,380	68,498,802	13,391,574	3,037,449
INDIANA	4,453,594	33,504,132	1,780,716	1,363,633
IOWA	699,839	18,730,396	2,743,926	655,480
KANSAS	1,393,661	13,690,161	2,689,423	673,038
KENTUCKY	1,494,479	24,367,581	5,624,792	883,728
LOUISIANA	1,783,432	21,720,807	4,205,000	1,281,698
MAINE	611,271	9,025,894	1,662,241	341,396
MARYLAND	1,258,218	29,171,836	4,546,322	1,240,731
MASSACHUSETTS	10,652,786	44,594,849	5,513,766	1,439,716
MICHIGAN	8,009,434	49,897,728	5,566,500	2,405,379
MINNESOTA	251,035	27,037,352	4,433,571	1,141,238
MISSISSIPPI	379,888	19,467,000	2,181,847	714,005
MISSOURI	1,178,476	32,709,200	1,733,626	1,299,256
MONTANA	428,376	5,022,237	781,600	341,396
NEBRASKA	150,407	10,385,444	1,333,000	415,528
NEVADA	289,153	5,156,559	477,500	341,396
NEW HAMPSHIRE	545,835	5,550,525	593,500	341,396
NEW JERSEY	3,948,026	56,259,850	7,737,529	1,913,768
NEW MEXICO	125,449	10,445,439	791,500	468,200
NEW YORK	22,526,821	86,436,933	26,041,729	4,588,362
NORTH CAROLINA	1,179,606	37,107,490	6,739,282	1,603,586
NORTH DAKOTA	328,897	4,003,657	854,835	341,396
OHIO	4,699,538	63,637,239	3,663,000	2,727,266
OKLAHOMA	487,508	21,094,194	2,658,500	842,760
OREGON	4,811,447	15,178,367	1,004,000	661,333
PENNSYLVANIA	14,270,285	63,479,232	15,754,721	2,797,496
PUERTO RICO	259,192	11,754,994	1,924,935	1,211,468
RHODE ISLAND	595,965	6,411,784	478,373	341,396
SOUTH CAROLINA	419,016	25,055,522	4,628,822	912,990
SOUTH DAKOTA	213,740	4,643,269	969,262	341,396
TENNESSEE	620,398	33,579,459	4,587,200	1,170,581
TEXAS	6,173,818	103,521,884	12,529,623	5,226,285
UTAH	934,846	13,754,489	1,730,632	614,513
VERMONT	1,637,663	3,393,376	253,245	341,396
VIRGINIA	856,397	38,292,388	9,130,642	1,533,356
WASHINGTON	2,090,618	24,363,581	7,938,625	1,229,026
WEST VIRGINIA	787,729	14,490,093	1,790,185	392,118
WISCONSIN	1,934,416	25,519,482	4,871,800	1,246,583
WYOMING	776,985	3,238,389	287,141	341,396
AMERICAN SAMOA	26,771	1,560,722	54,983	105,960
GUAM	160,330	4,480,348	127,152	282,559
NORTHERN MARIANAS	179,745	761,986	31,859	70,640
TRUST TERRITORIES	0	616,196	69,000	27,232
VIRGIN ISLANDS	84,073	4,146,094	140,531	211,919
BUR. OF INDIAN AFFAIRS	0	18,215,420	0	853,490
U.S. AND INSULAR AREAS	148,200,000	1,475,449,000	238,830,075	69,831,800
50 STATES, D.C. & P.R.	147,749,081	1,445,668,234	238,406,550	69,132,690

DATA AS OF OCTOBER 1, 1989.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Services to students with handicaps age 3-21 are funded under EHA-B, while Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, State-Operated Programs, ESEA (SOP) supports birth through age 21. The Preschool Grants Program funds age 3-5 year olds and infants and toddlers are served under Part-H of EHA.

Number of Children 6-21 By Handicapped Condtion During 1988-89 School Year.

STATE	ALL CONDITIONS	LEARNING DISABLED	SPEECH IMPAIRED	MENTALLY RETARDED	EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED	HARD OF HEARING & DEAF	MULTI-HANDI-CAPPED	ORTHO-PEDICALLY IMPAIRED	OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED
ALABAMA	94,963	32,292	22,507	30,122	6,310	964	1,033	535	734
ALASKA	12,982	6,985	2,771	1,978	561	142	294	86	123
ARIZONA	51,360	28,992	11,435	4,261	3,350	959	1,297	445	378
ARKANSAS	43,202	23,154	6,789	11,150	321	562	562	143	256
CALIFORNIA	397,342	237,648	91,162	24,097	11,598	6,658	5,318	6,602	11,636
COLORADO	48,668	23,755	7,802	3,235	8,867	783	3,141	752	0
CONNECTICUT	58,050	31,011	9,021	3,816	11,671	628	885	246	323
DELAWARE	12,262	6,925	1,586	1,241	1,754	158	149	229	128
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	6,626	3,194	1,021	1,066	943	39	173	80	59
FLORIDA	193,857	82,188	58,039	24,747	21,985	1,591	0	2,043	2,488
GEORGIA	86,706	25,430	18,421	22,676	17,458	1,136	0	749	355
HAWAII	11,554	6,539	2,081	1,194	785	251	211	273	133
IDAHO	18,331	10,449	3,140	2,848	486	287	228	312	520
ILLINOIS	222,238	102,848	55,712	26,865	27,728	2,970	160	2,992	1,795
INDIANA	101,187	38,514	35,264	19,758	4,433	1,152	884	555	136
IOWA	51,594	22,817	9,293	10,471	6,569	721	573	941	1
KANSAS	39,444	16,548	10,832	5,618	4,392	611	553	411	288
KENTUCKY	67,270	21,788	21,336	18,201	2,854	835	1,069	434	266
LOUISIANA	62,510	25,220	18,219	10,566	3,774	1,230	822	919	1,321
MAINE	25,114	10,985	5,490	2,789	4,029	288	914	231	286
MARYLAND	83,019	42,418	24,355	5,598	4,130	1,259	2,913	639	925
MASSACHUSETTS	133,874	47,207	30,712	28,341	18,435	1,893	2,964	1,485	1,889
MICHIGAN	147,669	65,677	32,955	20,067	19,796	2,487	1,766	3,564	676
MINNESOTA	73,108	34,707	13,831	10,471	10,699	1,327	149	1,159	378
MISSISSIPPI	54,045	26,280	17,397	8,525	238	459	291	663	0
MISSOURI	96,142	45,152	25,010	15,099	8,058	900	434	726	427
MONTANA	13,952	7,779	3,470	1,125	624	206	309	97	176
NEBRASKA	28,734	12,458	7,514	4,289	2,430	478	382	642	372
NEVADA	14,536	8,784	3,011	1,076	875	138	267	289	106
NEW HAMPSHIRE	16,406	10,043	2,709	991	1,626	216	245	151	321
NEW JERSEY	158,745	80,152	49,315	6,971	14,176	1,301	6,172	569	524
NEW MEXICO	30,017	14,385	8,684	2,986	3,147	394	592	510	75
NEW YORK	269,580	166,824	23,885	22,619	43,745	3,678	9,106	1,899	3,276
NORTH CAROLINA	106,044	45,964	23,500	20,929	9,870	1,775	1,327	889	2,058
NORTH DAKOTA	11,199	5,358	3,477	1,519	429	158	0	112	69
OHIO	190,402	74,263	49,547	43,286	7,578	2,075	9,152	3,599	0
OKLAHOMA	58,910	28,033	15,472	11,341	1,450	621	1,292	285	136
OREGON	45,794	24,685	11,508	3,598	2,763	1,060	0	836	999
PENNSYLVANIA	190,406	88,939	51,332	34,949	17,869	2,734	0	1,393	0
PUERTO RICO	33,040	18,021	1,277	16,214	910	1,068	1,715	451	739
RHODE ISLAND	18,185	12,089	2,914	1,027	1,451	163	80	148	240
SOUTH CAROLINA	66,814	27,211	17,801	15,090	6,075	963	376	721	145
SOUTH DAKOTA	12,533	5,640	3,728	1,575	532	290	415	175	89
TENNESSEE	94,997	49,250	22,814	13,420	2,492	1,520	1,852	904	1,824
TEXAS	296,410	167,419	50,492	24,412	23,941	4,181	3,860	3,627	8,651
UTAH	40,036	17,637	7,449	3,266	9,114	500	1,162	248	329
VERMONT	11,680	5,063	3,365	1,693	881	195	150	129	145
VIRGINIA	96,652	49,340	22,551	13,163	7,718	1,181	989	646	498
WASHINGTON	66,825	34,738	12,249	7,402	4,251	1,501	2,006	938	3,434
WEST VIRGINIA	41,549	18,986	10,636	8,556	2,275	374	2	327	150
WISCONSIN	68,630	23,226	12,859	4,958	10,003	217	16,521	402	210
WYOMING	9,361	5,056	2,469	690	564	161	1	146	220
AMERICAN SAMOA	286	0	104	153	3	16	5	2	0
GUAM	1,604	792	124	479	35	29	93	24	10
NORTHERN MARIANAS	700	135	220	110	7	25	81	83	11
TRUST TERRITORIES	191	35	13	9	1	20	1	11	89
VIRGIN ISLANDS	1,160	254	237	569	36	19	14	5	12
BUR. OF INDIAN AFFAIRS	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
U.S. AND INSULAR AREAS	4,190,515	1,998,422	968,908	581,485	377,295	57,555	84,878	47,392	50,349
50 STATES, D.C. & P.R.	4,186,574	1,997,206	968,202	580,145	377,213	57,446	84,676	47,267	50,227

DATA AS OF OCTOBER 1, 1989.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

survey of members about the most important concerns in transporting handicapped children at NAPT's annual conference in November. And this what they had to say:

"They would like to see more workshops and programs they could sit through and take home. There's a pressing need for high quality and low cost training material concerning bus evacuation, attendant training and changes in the law," said Dianne Linder, chairman of NAPT's special education committee.

There are more bus aides, nurses and teacher aids riding the school bus assisting the handicapped. Transportation providers are also developing in-house training programs for drivers.

According to Beekman, public health departments, universities or private hospitals have training programs for people that deal with handicapped children, and ambulance and paramedic trainers could be a good source for training drivers, he said, "But they are going to have to hunt and scrounge to find these programs."

State associations have developed special education transportation committees to assist the pupil transportation industry in developing handicapped transportation plans.

At the 11th National Standards Conference last May, significant strides were made in developing guidelines for transporting the handicapped.

And the federal government is getting involved in developing safety standards for transporting the handicapped. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) published a notice of proposed rulemaking about proposed safety recommendations for transporting wheelchair occupants.

However, transporting wheelchair occupants is only part of the picture. What transportation providers are dealing with now is much more complex. In addition to transporting more medically fragile children, transportation providers are transporting handicapped infants and toddlers.

In 1986, EHA was amended to pro-

vide more services for that age group. To receive funds for those programs, states are required to develop early intervention services for those children and their parents.

"The numbers of that age group is increasing because of the child find component," said Mary Ellen Campbell, coordinator of the National Alternative Transportation Cooperative in Albuquerque, N.M. That organization developes handicapped training materials for drivers and transportation professionals.

The cooperative has produced a series of video tapes about how to deal with autistic children, children with epilepsy and tapes illustrating basic child lifting techniques and emergency evacuation procedures. The program is funded through 402 funds and each tape costs $50.

Congress allocated roughly $70 million to states for the 1989-90 school year for early intervention programs and related services.

States received from $341,400 to $8.5 million for those services, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. In 1988, there were 128,000 handicapped infants and 321,360 preschoolers receiving special education services.

Until federal safety regulations are developed that address that age group and the medically fragile population, pupil transportation providers are on their own.

Company helps district reconfigure wheelchair tracks

Ortho Safe Systems Inc. has helped Robert Butscher, fleet manager for the Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation, Clevland, Ohio obey the law. "A new state law mandates a 30-inch aisle to accommodate wheelchairs so we had to reconfigure our tracks," Butscher said.

In cooperation with Ortho Safe, his district has made changes in the hardware of the Protector™, a wheelchair tiedown and occupant protection system manufactured by Ortho Safe.

The new configuration can accommodate any wheelchair length. That was done so if a bus breaks down, another bus can pick-up the wheelchair passenger.

Butscher has 120 buses, all with lifts. "The problem is that wheelchairs come in a variety of lengths, widths and heights," Butscher said.

So he looked for a system that would allow for 156 inches of track for different wheelchair positions. "We can get any combinations of wheelchairs on our buses," he said. The harness can work in any position whether the track faces front or sideways.

The system is on 23 Blue Bird TC2000 school buses.

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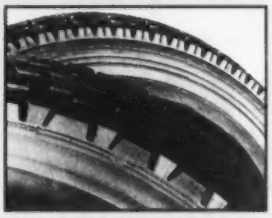
Vol. 37 No. 4

JUNE / JULY 1991

National School Bus Service covers 10 states 20



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On the cover: John Nolan (left) of National School Bus Service in Barrington, Ill., and Geoff Davies of Charterways in Toronto, Can.

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EDITORIAL AWARD
JESSE H. NEAL CERTIFICATE, 1985

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Average Contractor Serves 16 Schools, 17,921 Students

An average North American school bus contractor transported 17,921 students (1,374 of them special-ed pupils) one way during the 1990-91 school year.

Further, that average contractor served 16 schools and had 13 contracts.

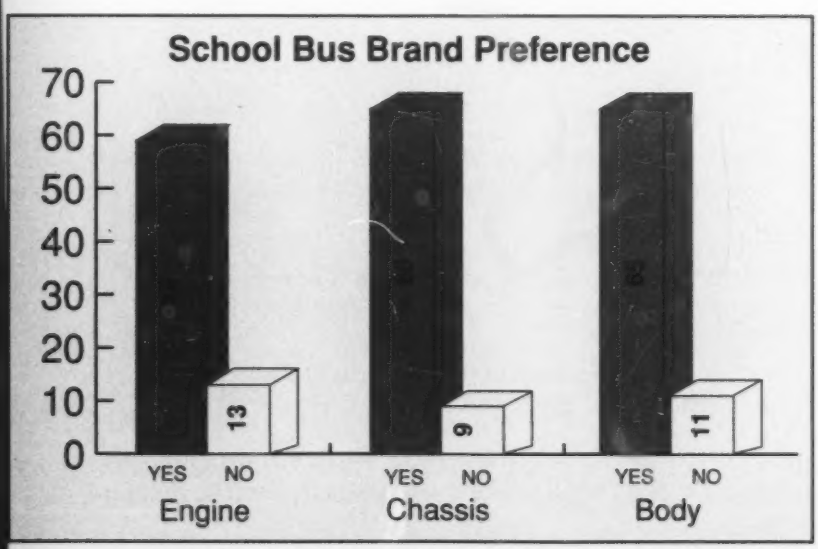
Those are among the results of an exclusive *SCHOOL BUS FLEET* magazine survey. We mailed 200 questionnaires to contractors around the United States and Canada selected at random from our subscriber list. Eighty-four contractors, together operating 4,564 school buses, responded. (Those not responding to particular questions were not computed into averages.)

Fully 92 percent of all respondents reported operating both large (3,729) and small (835) buses.

Seven percent reported operating more than 100 school buses, eight percent operated 50 to 99 school buses, 24 percent operated 25 to 49 school buses, and 44 percent operated one to 24 school buses.

Smaller contractors expressed brand preferences for bus bodies, engines and chassis at a much greater rate than did large contractors. By a margin of 13 to one, small contractors have a bus body preference versus two to one for large contractors. A margin of seven to one, small contractors (1 to 24 buses) have an engine brand preference versus a margin of five to one among large contractors (100 or more buses). Chassis preference for small contractors is 13 to one versus five to one for large contractors. This disparity is likely due to the prevalence of mixed fleets among larger contractors.

The recession appears to be of mild concern to contractors, at least in terms of vehicle acquisitions. All respondents, regardless of fleet size, indicated they expect to purchase fewer school buses for the 1992-93 than the 1991-92 school year. Overall, the average contractor expects to buy seven buses for the 1991-92 school year and five buses for the 1992-93 school year.



Survey respondents were asked if they had brand preference for school bus engines, chassis and bodies. Chart shows number who said "yes" or "no" to those components.

When asked to estimate the percentage of total transportation service during the current school year for activity trips, responses ranged from 14 percent to 17 percent.

Meanwhile, contractors report a growing segment of their business is non-school contract service. Contractors with more than 50 buses reported slightly over 10 percent of their work was in non-school transportation service while those with fewer than 50 buses reported slightly under six percent.

The survey also showed the average contractor owned 48 large, Type I buses with an average age of nine years. However, these data were skewed by the fact that the average fleet age for contractors with 24 or fewer buses is 11 years while those with 25 or more buses is five years.

Meanwhile, the average contractor owned 18 small, Type II buses with an average age of six years. Again, fleet age varied widely with smaller contractors averaging 10 year fleet age while larger contractors averaged five years.

Contractors were asked to rate the importance of five developments affecting pupil transportation. A response of 1 indicated greatest concern and 5 indicated least concern. Driver availability led the list among all fleet sizes. Insurance costs ranked second, a catchall category of "other" ranked third, handicapped transportation fourth and alternative fuels fifth.

Contractors operating 100 or more buses reported a total of 660 contracts, averaging 82 school transportation contracts each. That figure dropped to six or less contracts each for fleets of 50 buses or less. Altogether, respondents to the survey reported 1,050 contracts with school districts.

According to survey results, the

average contractor:

- Has 3.9 contracts for this summer. Last summer the figure was 3.53. Fifty contractors provide summer transportation; 25 do not.
- Forty-one contractors said they had fuel-escalation clauses in most of their school contracts; 33 did not.
- Those who had gasoline buses said their fleets averaged 52 percent gasoline buses. With diesel it was 60 percent, and with propane, 32 percent. No other fuels were listed.

Contractors talk

The contractors were asked why they thought they could do a better job providing school transportation than fleets operated by school districts. Many expressed common themes: better maintenance and service, cost-effectiveness and drivers. Here's a sampling:

"We must be competitive, yet we have more flexibility in purchasing than a government body," said E.C. "Skip" Hessler, president of Hessler Bus Co. Inc., which has 27 buses in Ellwood City, Pa.

"We maintain a greater concern for vehicle maintenance, cleanliness and economics since our names are usually on the bus," said Russell Wiebold, owner of Wiebold Bus Service, which has six buses in Janesville, Minn.

"I think that individual schools much prefer working with a smaller contractor as opposed to a large-fleet manager," said W.F. Strickland, owner of W.F. Strickland — School Bus Contractor of Mayport, Fla., which has

N.M. contractor keeps it all in-house

Helweg & Farmer Transportation Co. Inc. keeps it all in the family.

The contractor in Las Cruces, N.M., has 164 employees (149 drivers, seven office staff and eight in the shop) and does all its own overhauling, repairing, body work and painting. H&F also provides all training in-house with certified instructors for school bus, Commercial Driver's License, defensive driving and first aid. Full-time safety officers help drivers on their routes with traffic problems and student discipline.

The company will start a new drug-testing program for all interstate activity-trip drivers in August.

If all that sounds tough, the company has some perks. Workers and their families get health and life insurance for 25 percent of cost. H&F puts out a monthly employee newsletter. Workers are eligible for two bonuses at the end of the school year, for attendance and having no preventable accidents or incidents. They also get a yearly dinner-dance. There is a company drivers' road-e-o.

H&F has 128 Type I buses, all with two-way radios. Its only contract is with Las Cruces School District #2. It transports 9,000 students daily on 115 route buses to 32 schools. The company drives 9,000 miles daily, 1.6 million miles a year.

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three buses.

"As a private contractor we are not as dependent on the tax dollars to make our operational improvements," said William Stone, contract manager for Mayflower Contract Service, which operates 91 buses from its St. Joseph. Mo. yard, "and our biggest area of improvement is our driving force. We require more training than most states."

Louis Zanella, owner of Hurley Transit Inc., which has 15 buses in Gile, Wis., echoed a thread common to many of the contractors: "We're a family-operated business, with each member having multiple jobs. This saves the school district money."

Some contractors also praised the districts. "Most of the school districts do a good job providing transportation," said Patrick Keelen Jr., vice president of Pat Keelen and Son's Inc., which has 45 buses in Keansburg, N.J.

Many contractors said they have to try harder than the districts to be successful, and being small is an advantage. But the most prescient comment on the key to contractor success came from Marty Douma of Douma Transfer in Manhattan, Mont.

"I think the secret of being a good contractor is love of children," he said, "and I think kids are great."

Contractors face tougher job

By Karen Finkel

Over the past decade two great changes have occurred simultaneously, changes that are propelling student transportation in America to a new, higher level of service and importance.

First, a new breed of school administrator and board member has begun demanding greater fiscal accountability, including increased reliance on outside contractors.

Second, the contracted student transportation industry has matured, with increasingly professional managers eager to serve the needs of a growing number of school districts across the nation.

The result has been a true school-business partnership. Contractor-owned buses represent more than 30 percent of the nation's fleet. The nationwide trend is toward still more competition, and changes in several states' laws favor additional contracting.

Issues confronting the industry include: alternative fuels; underground storage tanks; understanding the true cost of student transportation; and new vehicle standards such as stop arms and additional emergency exits, which add to budgetary pressure. The 1990s and beyond look like more of the same: constant change, growing complexity and an ever-tightening web of state and federal regulation.

The good news is that the people who run student transportation are up to the task.

Finkel is executive director of NSTA.

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You see, B A N A N A explains our unique mirror better than any of our engineers ever could. The B A N A N A bows out in the middle, like a banana...and it's elongated...like a banana!

This shape allows the B A N A N A to give your driver *40% better field of view* than conventional dual 8-inch mirrors, including the front of the bus (where most accidents happen). Its unique mounting makes it *virtually vibration-proof*...and it even comes with an *optional internal heater* for our Northern friends.

So, again, "thank you" to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration...now you know why we're so proud of the B A N A N A: it's a bunch better than the rest!

Banana Mirror Rated #1
*N.H.T.S.A. test published August 1990. Document available to the public from National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161. Title: "Ergonomic Research on School Bus Cross View Mirror Systems."
Banana Mirror Coverage: Front – 99%; Side – 100%

SCM

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Circle 127 on SBF Action Card